

HACKLETON Parish Council



Hackleton, Horton, Piddington, Preston Deanery and part of Wootton Fields

Wildlife & Biodiversity Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 introduced a duty for all public authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Section 40 of the Act states: *“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”*. The duty affects all public authorities and aims to raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity. Conservation of biodiversity requires an all-inclusive approach, integrating it into a wide variety of activities.

This document supports and should be read in conjunction with Northants Biodiversity Action Plan <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/archaeology-biodiversity-and-landscape/documents/PDF%20Documents/Northamptonshire%20BAP%202015-2020.pdf>

Hackleton Parish Council understands that biodiversity is a crucial component of the quality of life for the communities it serves and is aware of its responsibility to conserve and enhance biodiversity and recognises it as a natural and integral part of policy and decision making.

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Biological Diversity (Biodiversity) refers to the variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems, and can encompass the evolutionary, ecological, and cultural processes that sustain life. Biodiversity includes not only species we consider rare, threatened, or endangered but also every living thing – from humans to organisms we know little about, such as microbes, fungi, and invertebrates. **Biodiversity = Nature.**

Biodiversity is important as it boosts ecosystem productivity where each species has an important role to play, for example:

- Greater species diversity ensures natural sustainability for all life forms
- Healthy ecosystems can better withstand and recover from a variety of disasters.

Biodiversity itself is recognised as an essential, but diminishing, resource and its loss can have considerable consequences for communities and habitats.

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Biodiversity, is a scientific measure of the variety of species, habitats, and ecosystems across the planet. It's essential for human existence and a flourishing countryside. As well as underpinning the food we eat and the air we breathe, we depend on it for protection from other threats, like pollution, flooding and climate breakdown.

Rates of extinction in the last five decades have accelerated hundreds of times faster than in the past. The red squirrel, natterjack toad, and turtle dove are all in peril in our countryside, alongside many insects that we rely on. But why? What is driving our living world to the brink? And, most importantly, what can be done?

The largest impact on ecosystems that people depend on for food, clean water and a stable climate is converting and managing wild land for agriculture and development.

BUT HACKLETON PARISH SITS IN THE MIDDLE OF OPEN COUNTRYSIDE SO WHY WORRY?

We've all heard about the destruction of the rainforests and the extinction of the dodo. However, on our own doorstep our own biodiversity is suffering a similar fate. For example since the 1930's 97% of our flower rich meadows have been lost and in the six-years to 1990 20% of the UK's hedgerows were destroyed. As habitats are destroyed, so too are the plants and animals which depend on them. The song thrush has declined by 50% over the last 25-years and the common house sparrow and starling often referred to as pests in the past, are now considered to be of national conservation concern.

Restoring nature is critical to reversing the loss of biodiversity. Ecosystems don't need to be lost forever; it's possible to restore them by planting trees, shrubs, wildflower meadows. It is so important that local communities take the lead in conservation projects, with benefits for people as well as nature.

Biodiversity and climate change are inseparable, and combined, present the greatest threat our countryside has ever faced. Restoring nature is our primary defence against climate breakdown, and climate breakdown will continue to accelerate the decline of nature. Natural ecosystems suck up 60% of our carbon emissions, and nature-based solutions, like planting trees, nurturing soils, and restoring ecosystems, can provide significant climate solutions.

As a community we can make a difference and reverse some of the loss of biodiversity. We can embrace the natural habitats around us and set the right example to future generations.

AIM

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To enhance, protect and raise the profile of biodiversity within the Parish. To make biodiversity an integral part of all decision making. To “do no harm” and encourage the whole community to join us.

OBJECTIVES

- Protect and support the biodiversity of the land that Hackleton Parish Council owns.
- Protect and support the biodiversity of land that Hackleton Parish Council can influence.
- Support the Hackleton Parish Neighbourhood Plan vision of 2029.
- Increase community awareness of biodiversity issues.
- Support local biodiversity projects

HACKLETON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (HNDP)

VISION

Given the rural nature of Hackleton Parish, consideration was given to biodiversity throughout the creation of the Plan. The vision is:

In 2029 precious green open spaces and ancient habitats have been conserved and enhanced. A network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways have been created and improved in our countryside to foster health, fitness and parish cohesion. The green, blue and grey infrastructures have been nurtured and enhanced to provide an environment for the benefit of all flora, fauna and people.

The Plan has seven main objectives, of these 3 make particular reference to wildlife and biodiversity:

Objective 2: To conserve and enhance the character and natural environment of the neighbourhood area and ensure a net gain in biodiversity.

Policy HNDP4 New Development

New development is designed in such a way so as to make a positive use of local landform, trees, hedgerows and other vegetation and for larger proposals has had suitable regard to landscape setting and settlement pattern;

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It conserves or enhances existing wildlife habitats and incorporates new native planting and landscaping that create new habitats, nesting (e.g. for birds and bats) and foraging opportunities and result in a net gain in biodiversity;

It uses space and creates new public open spaces that are enclosed, integrated and overlooked by buildings and are in prominent useable locations. Such spaces should use native planting (including wildflowers to encourage pollinators);

It includes appropriate boundary treatments that reflect local context and landscaping using predominantly native species to support a net-gain for wildlife. It provides highways for hedgehogs by allowing access through boundary walls and fences;

It uses existing watercourses and ditches, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS, such as swales) to hold rainwater in storms. SuDS should be planted with native vegetation to support wildlife. All paving should be semi-permeable to allow run-off to drain away;

It includes features to minimise light pollution;

It ensures there is no loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodland. Where trees or woodland cannot be retained, they are to be replaced at a ratio of at least 2:1 native trees. Three new native trees will be planted for each new dwelling; and

Where relevant, applicants will be required to produce a green infrastructure plan. This should demonstrate how the development links to the existing green infrastructure network and how any open spaces and garden areas will be permeable to wildlife.

Policy HNDP5 Wildlife Corridors

Where development may adversely affect the effective functioning or connectivity of the Wildlife proposals should:

Where practicable, retain or enhance existing landscape and natural features (such as trees, hedges, watercourses and important habitats); and

Where corridors are disrupted, such proposals ensure an alternative corridor can be provided to ensure equivalent connectivity is maintained.

Objective 3: To protect local green spaces and open spaces within the area.

Policy HNDP6 – Protecting Local Green Spaces

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The following areas as shown on the Policies Map are designated Local Green Spaces in accordance with paragraphs 99 and 100 of the NPPF:

HNDP6/1 – Longland Meadow HNDP6/2 – Piddington Fields

Development of the designated Local Green Spaces will only be permitted when consistent with national planning policy for Green Belt.

Policy HNDP7 – Protecting Other Open Spaces

Development that would result in the loss of the open spaces within the Village Confines and identified on the Policies Map will be only supported when:

Equivalent or better provision is provided elsewhere within a suitable location within the same Village Confines boundary; or

It can be clearly demonstrated by the applicant that the open space no longer performs a useful open space function in terms of the local environment, amenity, or active public recreation use.

Objective 4: To protect the surrounding countryside and natural resources.

Policy HNDP8 - Conserving the surrounding countryside and natural resources

New development should conserve or enhance the local landscape by:

Maintaining and enhancing the landscape setting, landscape features, field and settlement pattern of the neighbourhood area;

Seeking to conserve in situ known heritage assets of archaeological value, including “ridge and furrow”;

Retaining or enhancing ponds, streams, mature trees, woodland, ancient and mature hedgerows, or where removal is unavoidable, providing by way of offsetting replacement habitat elsewhere on-the-site or within the neighbourhood plan area;

Where new planting and landscaping is proposed it should use native species and be designed in such a way so as to ensure that it is suitable when considered in the wider local landscape, and where appropriate, links to existing woodland and hedgerows;

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Taking account of the impact of the development on the views identified in the relevant Village Design Guide and those views identified in Appendix 2 of the HNPD. Development affecting these views and vistas should be designed in such a way so as not to have a significant adverse impact on their visual quality and amenity;

Where opportunities arise creation of new views and vistas;

Promote high quality residential design that respects local townscape and landscape character and reflects local vernacular building styles,

layouts and materials;

Seek to minimise the encroachment of development into visually exposed landscapes and where development is proposed on the edge of the village, it enhances views of the settlement edge from the surrounding countryside and does not lead to inappropriate incursion into the surrounding countryside by reason of its siting, design, materials or use of landscaping;

Maintaining and improving access to the surrounding countryside; and by seeking to conserve and enhance the integrity and fabric of historic buildings and their settings, particularly where new uses are proposed through the use of appropriate styles and sustainable locally distinctive materials.

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of this policy the following Action Plan has been created. This is a working document which will be monitored, evaluated and updated on regular basis. Community engagement will be the focus on the launch of the document with a parish wide survey to raise awareness and encourage participation and interest/support. Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to suggest amendments/updates on an ongoing basis.

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING METHOD
Cemetery Protect and support biodiversity	Plant the bank in the extension against the Churchyard wall with wildflowers	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources	1	Open spaces working party
	Additional trees and native hedging. Intermittent beds/strips for planting wildflowers and naturalising bulbs.	Increased cover for invertebrates, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Carbon capture.	2-3	Open spaces working party
	An avenue of cherry trees between Cemetery & extension	Encouraging insects particularly butterflies & bees. Carbon capture.	1-2	Open spaces working party
	Maintain and renew bird boxes as required	Additional nesting options	Ongoing	Groundsman
	Review Cemetery Regulations with a view to banning plastic etc.	Protect habitats and food sources.	1	Full Council
	Obtain community support for planting to encourage biodiversity. Raise awareness of biodiversity and overcome a perception of untidiness and disrespect	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	3-4	Communication

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING METHOD
Churchyard Protect and support biodiversity	Sympathetically carry out wall repairs respecting lichen etc. Replace dead or diseased trees as reported in the tree survey with native varieties	Protect habitats Protect & increase diversity of habits Additional nesting options	1-5 As tree report	Contractor 3-yearly report
	Install stone planters	Additional habitats	3-5	Completion of wall
	Maintain and renew bird boxes as required	Support nesting	Ongoing	Groundsman
	Install a raised bird bath	Protect/support habitats	1-2	Full Council
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING METHOD
Longland Meadow Protect, enhance & support biodiversity. Sustain & enhance in accordance with the intent of the donor.	Additional landscaping to pond to remove rear path & create terraces Planting of native marginal plants in new areas Removal of "thug" plants Removal of silt and stones	Sustain & enhance natural habitats	1-2 1-2 Annually 5-yearly	Volunteer group with support & assistance of Full Council and Groundman
	Maintenance of butterfly patch	Sustain & enhance natural habitats	Annually	Volunteer group with support & assistance of Full Council and Groundman
	Creation of a log pile	To create a new wildlife community	1-2 years	Volunteer group with support & assistance of Full

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	Prune and thin trees as required to maintain healthy growth	Sustain & enhance natural habitats	Annually	Council and Groundman Volunteer group with support & assistance of Full Council and Groundman
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING METHOD
Recreation Ground				
Protect and support biodiversity	Sympathetically maintain hedging Consider planters to soften replacement play area/outdoor gym	Food sources & cover Additional habitat	Ongoing 1-3	Contractor Full Council
Raise awareness of biodiversity	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs	Protecting habitats	Ongoing	Communication
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING METHOD
Other open spaces	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs	Protecting habitats	Ongoing	Communication
Protect and enhance biodiversity	Target areas for asset transfer to the parish council	Protecting/enhancing habitats	1-5	Full Council
	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Communication
	Create and adopt hedgehog highways	Protecting/enhancing habitats	1-2	Open Spaces

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<p>New Developments</p> <p>Protect and support biodiversity</p>	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Promote the Neighbourhood Plan to potential developers</p> <p>Ensure the new unitary authority has good knowledge of the Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning Committee</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p>
<p>Increase Community awareness of biodiversity</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife</p> <p>Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links</p> <p>Provide articles in the Parish Mag' about how to make your garden more wildlife friendly</p> <p>Encourage individuals/groups to take responsibility</p> <p>Provide seed bombs/bulbs etc for residents use</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting</p> <p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the Parish</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Increase diverse habitats</p> <p>Protect habitats</p> <p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>1</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>On Launch of Policy</p>	<p>Communication</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk/Councillors/ Groundsman</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Survey</p>

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	Encourage individual responsibility not to litter	Protect biodiversity	Ongoing	Communication
Support Community Projects	Work in partnership with the School to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them	Promote biodiversity	1-3	Governing Body
	Work in partnership with all Parish organisations to support/promote biodiversity	Promote biodiversity	Ongoing	Communication
	Look favourably on grant applications which support enhanced biodiversity	Promote biodiversity	Ongoing	Full Council
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity	Promote biodiversity	Ongoing	Full Council

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